
Have You Heard the News?

VITA's Enterprise Security Thwarts MyDoom Computer Virus

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Responding to frontline information gathered from the security community, VITA quickly issued a security alert informing agencies of the MyDoom computer worm and provided preventative steps to avoid infection. In addition, VITA's enterprise security measures directly protected the Commonwealth's IT assets at all agencies that have completed the standardization and optimization activities, including the Cabinet and Governor's offices. At an estimated cost of \$500 per infected computer (tech support, lost productivity, securing computers), VITA's proactive security measures are an illustrative lesson in cost avoidance.

Enterprise security is one of the foundational issues behind VITA's creation. By having a cohesive, sound, and proactive security structure in place, VITA was able to respond quickly and effectively to this latest Internet virus – not only ensuring the continued security of the Commonwealth's IT assets, but saving Virginia the significant costs associated with viruses such as MyDoom.

Unleashed in late January, the MyDoom virus is considered to be one of the fastest spreading Internet worms to-date, with the financial damage to businesses and industries (from network slowdowns to lost productivity) assumed to be in the billions of dollars.

The MyDoom virus arrives as an official-looking email, enticing the recipient to open an attached file with an .exe, .scr, .zip, or .pif extension. Once opened, the file unleashes a program with a timed attack of the SCO Corp. Web site. The intention is to overload the SCO site with so many requests it is unable to respond, thereby causing it to shutdown. MyDoom spreads, once opened, by going through a recipient's address book and randomly sending emails to those listed.

While the cost to an individual user is low, the potential cost to the enterprise is enormous. Companies and Internet service providers across the globe are struggling with the volume of infected emails. SCO Corp. has offered a reward for information regarding the authors of the MyDoom virus.

For additional information, please contact Benny Ambler at benny.ambler@vita.virginia.gov.

The creation of VITA by the 2003 General Assembly is intended to yield significant savings for the Commonwealth, and increased efficiencies and service improvements to the state's technology infrastructure.

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